

Regular Meeting Minutes
December 12, 2017
90 Longwood Avenue
4:30 PM

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Trietsch at 4:35 PM. Those present included Ms. Dugan, Mr. Jacobs, Ms. Sullivan, and Ms. Katz.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- The issues raised by residents at the November Board meeting have been taken care of.
- The BHA served approximately 150 meals at its annual Thanksgiving dinner for residents of senior developments. Special thanks to David Trietsch and his family and to all the volunteers, and to BHA Graduate Fellow, Adam Goldstein, for coordinating the event.
- Adam Goldstein has accepted a job at Affirmative Investments, an affordable housing finance and development organization.
- Mr. Dober, Mr. Trietsch, and Mr. Jacobs will be meeting with the Housing Advisory Board (HAB) to discuss HAB's willingness to assist the BHA with pre development financing associated with the BHA's RAD plans.

Mr. Trietsch mentioned the value of having a Town that shares a common vision with the BHA.

- The pending federal tax legislation is very important to the BHA's RAD redevelopment plans. The Senate version would have a moderately negative effect, while the House version would be seriously problematic.
- On December 19, 2017, the Town will be holding a special meeting for BHA residents at the Walnut Street Apartments relating to the Gateway East roadway reconstruction project. The Town's plans have reached a level at which they are allowed to begin discussions with the BHA about their interest in acquiring a small parcel of BHA land necessary for them to complete the project.

Construction Report

BHA Director of Capital Improvements, Sharon Cowan, reported the following:

- Installation of the new emergency generator at Sussman House is scheduled for next week.
- The Trustman Apartments community and office space renovations are moving forward. Completion of this project should occur after the first of the year.
- The Trustman Apartments Amory Street building roof replacement project has been completed.
- The courtyard design for the first phase of the Egmont Street Veterans Apartments courtyard project is nearly done, with bidding planned for January.
- Schematic design documents have been received for the project that combines various mechanical and electrical upgrades at federal developments.
- The Town's Planning Department has issued a notice that applications will be accepted for the next round of CDBG-funded projects.

Ms. Dugan asked if the temporary generator is still being utilized at 22 High Street. Ms. Cowan said that the temporary generator is still in use, as the BHA is still awaiting the completion of the repair of the

existing generator. Mr. Dober added that the cost of the rental generator will be paid through the federal Capital Fund.

Mr. Jacobs asked if there is any risk of losing 2016 Capital Funding if the projects are not completed on time. Ms. Cowan said that the timeline for expending 2016 Capital Funds is right on schedule.

Resident Association Report

Brookline Housing Town-Wide Tenant Association (BHTWTA) Officer, Shawn O'Neal, reported that they plan to have a Christmas tree decorating event at the Walnut Street Apartments.

Egmont Tenant Association (ETA) President, Sean Jaynes, reported the following:

- Approximately sixty people were served a meal at the ETA sponsored Thanksgiving dinner at Egmont Street Veterans Apartments. As part of the effort to build community, several of the attendees were Northeastern University Students from India.
- The ETA is pleased with the updated design for the courtyard upgrades.
- The ETA is working with BHA Property Manager, Kelley Chambliss, on purchasing and installing new signs to discourage neighbors from allowing their dogs to mess on BHA property.
- The ETA wants to know if the BHA has a snow removal plan in place in the event that this winter yields a high volume of snow. Mr. Dober said that there is a snow removal plan in place and he plans to review it with Maintenance Department staff.

Ms. Dugan said that BHA staff has done an excellent job with snow removal at Walnut Street Apartments so far this year.

Ms. Dugan said that the Kickham Apartments Christmas party was a wonderful event. The Kickham family and BHA Property Manager, Sheila O'Flaherty, did a fine job coordinating everything.

Board Meeting Minutes

On a motion from Mr. Jacobs and a second from Ms. Sullivan, the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on November 21, 2017 were unanimously approved.

Resident Services

Mr. Dober introduced members of the BHA staff who provide resident services for adult non-senior residents.

ESOL Program Director, Danielle Mendola, reported the following:

- She came to the BHA with a background in education and social work and has been the ESOL Program Director for two years. She has spent the last 14 years working with the low income immigrant community in greater Boston.
- She coordinated ESOL classes at five BHA locations this fall. The classes have served a diverse population ranging from teenagers to seniors. All BHA developments are represented.
- She has focused on the hardest to reach BHA populations. Toward this effort, she rolled out a pilot one-on-one tutoring program which has served as a gateway to the fall classes.
- She established a family literacy program with parents studying children's literature and composing their own children's stories.
- A primary goal of the ESOL program is to foster community.

- The ESOL program collaborates with the BHA Family Learning Centers, Women and Girls Thriving, The Brookline Public Libraries, and various social service programs that promote economic self-sufficiency.
- She applied for and received program grants from Eastern Bank and First Literacy.

Mr. Dober said that Ms. Mendola has also taken a lead role in establishing the BHA's new non-profit affiliate.

Next Steps Program Director, Grace Watson, reported the following:

- She has been at the BHA for four and a half years. Prior to coming to the BHA, she worked as a college and career counsellor at Bridge Over Troubled Waters.
- She was raised in Brookline by low-income immigrant parents and is now raising her own family in Brookline.
- As Next Steps Director, she works with adults on their vocational goals and job retention skills.
- She collaborates closely with the Steps To Success (STS) program. Her new STS initiative is with non-college bound students at the High School. She is also helping to start an internship with the GAP apparel company.
- Since coming to the BHA, she has more than doubled the numbers of BHA residents being served by Next Steps.
- Ongoing community collaborations include: A Women and Girls Thriving employment network; a "Spring Career Fair" with the Brookline Teen Center; and a financial literacy program.
- She believes that the greatest needs of her BHA clients are hard skills training, and help with under employment and under education.

Mr. Dober said that with the help of the Brookline Community Foundation, the BHA is expanding the service model of its HUD Resident Opportunities for Self Sufficiency (ROSS) grant program. As the HUD grant focuses on families in BHA federally funded public housing, a new grant from the Brookline Community Foundation allows similar services to benefit families in BHA state funded public housing. In both cases, the programs are administered through a contract between the BHA and the Brookline Community Mental Health Center (BCMHC).

Megan Smith, Service Coordinator for Walnut Street Apartments and High Street Veterans Apartments was unable to attend this meeting because of a prior commitment.

Amanda Sidman, Service Coordinator for Trustman Apartments and Egmont Street Veterans Apartments, reported the following:

- She started this past June in her part-time service coordinator position serving residents at the Egmont Street Veterans and Trustman Apartments. She rounds out her employment doing clinical work at BCMHC.
- Prior to coming to the BHA, she had done advocacy work at Rosie's Place.
- She is focusing on outreach to residents and connecting residents to needed services. Outreach includes going door to door to introduce herself, attending group events, and scheduling meet and greets.
- She has been attending training programs through Mass Law Reform Institute, and is sharing this information with BHA social service partners.
- She is collaborating with the Transition to Independent Living program and the Transition to Home program.

Lisa Brown, Family Learning Center Program Director, reported the following:

- She began her employment at the BHA this past June. Prior to this she worked as a paraprofessional at Brookline Public Schools for 17 years.
- She grew up at High Street Veterans Apartments, and feels that her life and professional experiences have led her to this job.
- During the day, she works with adult residents on issues such as computer literacy, online banking, and social media.
- During the evenings, she works to assist children with their homework assignments.
- She is starting a family literacy program utilizing Brookline High School volunteers.
- She meets regularly with school administrators and STS staff.
- Along with Megan Smith, she is teaching the “Tech Goes Home” curriculum to a group of BHA adult residents.

Mr. Jacobs said how impressed he was by the community-building efforts of these staff members. Mr. Trietsch said that the good work of these staff members helps the BHA to distinguish itself from its peers. Ms. Katz said that these partnerships are vital to the BHA resident community.

Mid-Year Budget Review

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- A mid-year report is provided to the Board every December, covering the period from April through September. It should be noted that at this time of year there is typically a budget surplus because the bulk of utility costs appear in the coming months.
- The consolidated budget comparison indicates that the BHA is in a solid financial position.
- Net income at this point is \$447,000.
- Public housing subsidy and Section 8 fees are at reasonable levels.
- The BHA is having some success controlling expenses by re-procuring services. This has led in many cases to better quality at lower costs.
- Reserves are at comparatively good levels.

The Board confirmed that the next meeting will be held at Morse Apartments on January 17, 2017 at 4:30 PM.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Mr. Jacobs, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 PM.

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ATTEST**



**Patrick Dober
Executive Director**